

# **2014 Closure of the Gulf of Mexico Red Snapper Recreational Sector Frequently Asked Questions December 2013**

## **How long will the 2014 Gulf red snapper recreational season be?**

- The Gulf-wide federal red snapper recreational season will be 40 days.
- Federal waters of the Gulf will open for red snapper recreational harvest at 12:01 a.m., June 1, 2014, and close at 12:01 a.m., July 11, 2014.

## **How was the season length calculated?**

- The length of the season is determined by the amount of the quota, the average weight of fish landed, and the estimated catch rates over time.
- This projection assumes Alabama, Mississippi, and Florida will implement consistent regulations in their state waters, and that Louisiana and Texas will continue the same regulations in their state waters as were implemented for the 2013 season.
- NOAA Fisheries is responsible for ensuring the entire recreational harvest, including harvest in state waters, does not exceed the recreational quota. Therefore, if states establish a longer season or a larger bag limit for state waters than the federal regulations allow in federal waters, the federal season must be adjusted to account for the additional harvest expected in state waters.
- For more details, please see the document at [http://sero.nmfs.noaa.gov/sustainable\\_fisheries/gulf\\_fisheries/red\\_snapper/documents/pdfs/2014/2014\\_rs\\_rec\\_season.pdf](http://sero.nmfs.noaa.gov/sustainable_fisheries/gulf_fisheries/red_snapper/documents/pdfs/2014/2014_rs_rec_season.pdf).

## **Why is the season length for red snapper so short when fishermen are seeing more fish?**

- There are more red snapper in the Gulf of Mexico today than there have been in decades. This is a sign that the rebuilding plan that began in 2007 is working.
- Because there are more fish, anglers are catching them faster, landing fish at three times the rate they did in 2007. The fish are also twice the size, on average, as before.
- To maintain and build on the progress made, NOAA Fisheries must set the recreational season to keep fishermen within their catch limit.

## **What other red snapper regulations are fishery managers considering?**

- The Gulf of Mexico Fishery Management Council is exploring a number of alternative management options, including:
  - A regional management strategy that would delegate some aspects of decision-making to individual Gulf states to provide greater flexibility at the local level while still meeting overall conservation objectives;
  - Reallocating all or some portion of future catch limit increases between the commercial and recreational sectors (the current allocation is 51% commercial and 49% recreational);
  - An inter-sector trading program; and
  - Separate management for private anglers and for-hire vessels.

**Where can I find more information on the red snapper fishery?**

- For more information on *Red Snapper, Past, Present and Future*, please visit [http://sero.nmfs.noaa.gov/sustainable\\_fisheries/gulf\\_fisheries/red\\_snapper/index.html](http://sero.nmfs.noaa.gov/sustainable_fisheries/gulf_fisheries/red_snapper/index.html).